

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

May 3, 2011 – 5 p.m.

For Additional Information:

Please contact the Franklin County Department of Public Safety (540) 483-3091

The Franklin County Department of Public Safety announced today that with the end of this seasons state burn ban, citizens will no longer be required to notify the County of plans to burn trash, brush or other materials on their property. The state-wide burn ban ended on April 30.

For many years, the County has asked our citizens to notify the Sheriff's Office Emergency Communications Center or the Department of Public Safety when planning to conduct an outdoor burn. Recent changes in fire department response guidelines for brush fires eliminated the need for notifications. Therefore, after discussing the outdoor burning policy with all stakeholders, the group determined that such notifications are no longer necessary and placed an undue burden on citizens. Basically, when the E911 center receives a report of a fire, the fire department will be dispatched to investigate.

The county ordinance pertaining to outdoor burning that allows for outdoor burning between April 30 and February 15th remains unchanged. The current ordinance states:

It shall be unlawful for any person to burn any garbage, trash, refuse, rubbish or other waste material in the county within one hundred (100) feet of a residence, garage, stable, outhouse, other structure or fence made of flammable material, or in any wooded area, unless the material to be burned is confined in a closed container of galvanized iron or other fireproof material or in an open container attended by an able-bodied person until the embers therein contained are burned out or the burning embers are extinguished. At the site of any fire within the purview of this paragraph there shall be a garden hose connected to the water supply or other fire extinguishing equipment readily available for use.

(b) Leaves and brush originating on the premises of private residences may be burned on those premises; providing, that:
(1) Such burning is done between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight and all embers are totally extinguished at the end of this period.

(2) No material is added to the fire between 9:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m.

(3) The location of burning is not less than one hundred (100) feet from any occupied building, unless the occupant has given prior written permission.

(4) To minimize the possibility of contaminant emission from inadvertent fires, at no time shall the fire be unattended.

(c) No burning of garbage, trash, refuse, rubbish or other waste material or of leaves or brush permitted under this section shall be commenced, or if such burning has been commenced it shall be immediately terminated, upon the declaration of an alert warning or emergency stage of the air pollution episode, when proclaimed by the executive director of the state air pollution control board of his designated representative.

(d) A violation of any provision of this section shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor.

During drought conditions and other times when it is unsafe to conduct outdoor burning, the Fire Marshal will notify public media outlets that a burn ban has been implemented.

If at any time a citizen is unsure it's safe to burn because of weather or other situations or if they have questions, they should call Public Safety at 540-483-3091. Officials ask persons planning to burn debris to speak with their neighbors prior to starting the fire. This practice will hopefully reduce the number of fire department responses to investigate controlled burning.

